THE UNVEILING

OF THE

VIRGINIA-NORTH CAROLINA MONUMENT AND WYATT MEMORIAL

AT

BETHEL, VIRGINIA,

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SPEECH BY

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OF NORTH CAROLINA

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THE UNVEILING OF THE VIRGINIA-NORTH CAROLINA MONUMENT AND WYATT MEMORIAL.

Your Excellency, Veterans of Virginia and North Carolina. Ladies and Gentlemen:

In the absence of the Governor of North Carolina, who deeply regrets his inability to be present on this occasion, I am here to express the great satisfaction and gratification of all true North Carolinians at this union of hearts and hands of the people of the two States which is expressed in the erection of these memorials—memorials of the first battle of the War Between the States, and to the first martyr sacrificed on the bloody altar of Southern independence.

This is historic ground; within the radius of a few miles are Jamestown, old Williamsburg, your colonial capital, Yorktown, Newport News with its great ship-building interests, and Hampton Roads, where in the great sea battle between the Monitor and Merrimac naval warfare was revolutionized. To the south of us is Norfolk, where a little more than a hundred years ago floated the ships and flags of all nations. At that time Norfolk had a greater shipping than New York. May we soon hail the day when she is again the metropolis of the New World.

This is not an unknown land to our people. Between Virginia and North Carolina the ties of propinquity, sympathy, common interest and blood relationship are greater perhaps than between any other two States of the Union. The stranger may ask the reason why. To us it is a familiar story.

In the latter part of the sixteenth century the conquering spirits of Europe were seeking empires in the New World. Daring adventurers were building England's sea power and her hardy mariners were spreading the white wings of her birds of victory in every clime. At that time the Virgin

Queen's favorite and most gallant courtier, to be worthy of his Royal Mistress' smile, founded for her an empire in the most favored region of the Western Hemisphere and named it in her honor, "Virginia."

Walter Raleigh, the knightliest figure of that heroic age, settled a colony and built Fort Raleigh on Roanoke Island "in Virginia." He was assisted in his enterprises by Sir Francis Drake, Sir Richard Grenville and Sir Humphrey Gilbert, but after spending his fortune and the best years of his life, his efforts were unsuccessful and the fate of his last and Lost Colony is one of the mysteries of history.

The next attempt of the English people under the same influences was more fortunate, and a permanent settlement was made at Jamestown in 1607 on the old site of the Spanish adventurer D'Ayllon's Colony. To this new colony came the "adventurer" of every type. Tide-water Virginia was soon filled with some of England's bravest and best, the stately lord, the sturdy planter and the bold pioneer of every class.

For fifty years the earliest settlers on the Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds in North Carolina were almost exclusively from Virginia. The ancestors of thousands of Carolina's sons came from this peninsula. On the shores of the York lie buried the bones of my forefathers. You furnished some of our earliest governors, and for long years after the southern colony was set apart even the boundary lines were undetermined. It was difficult to tell the Carolinian from his brother Virginian. Each claimed as his interest lay.

North Carolina has always acted the part of a loving sister to Virginia. Our fathers helped make your settlements, clear your fields and assisted in driving the foe and the red man from your borders. In your first expedition to the Ohio against the French and Indians, North Carolina sent you troops and Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia commissioned Colonel James Innes of North Carolina your commander-in-chief. Later it was this gallant Carolinian who, as Governor of Fort Cumberland, received and protected the broken and

fugitive forces of Braddock after his disastrous defeat. Again when you went forth to do battle on the Ohio, Colonel Hugh Waddell of North Carolina commanded your vanguard, and information secured from an Indian, taken by John Forbes, a North Carolinian, enabled you to capture Fort Du Quesne.

In the revolt of the American Colonies, when your great orator, Patrick Henry, electrified the world by his cry for "Liberty or Death!" North Carolinians under Colonel Robert Howe hurried to Great Bridge, joined Colonel Woodford of Virginia, and drove the British Governor Lord Dunmore to the protection of his ships. Colonel Woodford, the Virginia commander at Great Bridge, yielded command to Colonel Howe, who held the senior commission. For his gallantry at Norfolk Colonel Howe was commissioned Brigadier-General by the Continental Congress.

For eight long years during the great struggle for American independence the soldiers of Carolina fought by your side. In the first year or two of that struggle North Carolina put ten thousand men into the field and in all enlisted more than twenty-two thousand men to fight under the leadership of your great Washington. Our State became the chief recruiting ground in the South for the Continental Armies.

Thirteen months before the Declaration at Philadelphia our people, at Mecklenburg, May 20th, 1775, declared for independence, and at Halifax, April 12th, 1776, we were the first State to declare ourselves free, and by the close of that year North Carolinians were living under a government of their own making. Right nobly did they maintain their declaration. We sent troops to the north of us and troops to the south of us. In 1777 General Washington, almost forsaken, had retreated to the Delaware River, with scarce five thousand men. There General Nash, with six full regiments of North Carolinians, joined him, doubled the American forces and proved Washington's main reliance at Brandywine and Germantown. In this last battle General Nash, Colonels

Buncombe and Irwin, Captain Turner and other gallant North Carolinians were slain.

Colonel Campbell of Virginia commanded at King's Mountain, and, with Colonels Shelby, Cleveland and Sevier and our other mountain heroes, gained a victory which was the turning point of the Revolutionary War.

The Carolinians fought with General Dan Morgan and Colonel William Washington of the Old Dominion against Tarleton at Cowpens; and at Eutaw Springs the Virginians, in the hardest fought battle of the war, supported General Jethro Sumner of North Carolina in the famous bayonet charge which saved the Americans from defeat.

Again, at Guilford Court-House, it was the united valor of Virginians and Carolinians that made necessary the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

In the War of 1812, when the Virginia peninsula was in danger, we hurried Major-General Thomas Brown of Bladen, the hero of Elizabethtown, to your defense at Norfolk. His division was composed of the brigades of General Thomas Davis of Fayetteville and General James F. Dickinson of Murfreesboro.

In the establishment of the American Government, North Carolina for two generations followed the lead of your great apostle of free government, Thomas Jefferson, and supported him and his doctrines as loyally as did his own people of Virginia, against the encroachments of Federal power and Hamiltonian measures.

Reviewing the history of our Republic in peace as well as in war, it will be found that Virginia and North Carolina have always acted in unison—as one people. Virginia's fame is our common heritage and Carolina's glory shares its lustre with you.

In the War for Southern Independence, when the clouds of strife and death were lowering over your devoted land, the Carolina soldier again came to Virginia—came to this peninsula—came to Bethel; Bethel! sacred name, whose ancient

meaning was "House of God"—a fitting place to lay our first sacrifice upon the altar of the Confederacy and consecrate ourselves to a sacred cause. In my childhood I heard it at my mother's knee—heard it from a soldier father who loved the cause with a religious devotion.

Forty-four years ago to-day was fought the first battle of the great war which was to drench our land in blood, slay the flower of our manhood, desolate our homes, widow our women, starve our children and destroy the mighty fabric of State Sovereignty.

When the wires flashed the shock of battle to the world half a million Southrons sprang to arms. The mansions on the great plantations gave up their petted cavaliers, scions of a knightly race who knew no fear; the farmer and the laborer gave their only sons. They came from the mountains and from the sea; the coastal plain sent its rugged farmer boy and the Appalachians furnished their hardy mountaineer. In the rain of battle they knew no class distinction—valor was their code and the bravest were the greatest—Patriotism was their religion, and it seemed they believed with Eastern fanaticism that falling face to the foe meant translation to the Elysian Shore. In the march of death they went forth as school-boys to a May festival. No burnished helmets encircled their brows; no gilded trappings adorned their breasts. They were not arrayed in all the rich panoply of war—but on their cheeks there shone jewels richer than the Kohinoor's ray—'twas the Carolina woman's tear, and for her and their native land they went forth to battle and to die.

You have just heard a graphic story of the Battle of Bethel by a more eloquent tongue and from the lips of a gallant soldier who participated in the fight and helped to make history on that glorious day.

We came to Bethel 800 strong—the flower of Carolina's chivalry. Eager for battle and hungry for glory were the heroes we sent you. Heroes bearing illustrious names in their native land—names to which added honors came. Com-

manding the regiment was Colonel Daniel Harvey Hill, the hero of Chepultepec. He had been taught the art of war in the National Military Academy. He had also been taught there the admitted right of a State to secede.

At West Point he was a leader in the class composed of such distinguished generals as Longstreet, A. P. Stewart, G. W. Smith, R. H. Anderson and Van Dorn, of the Confederate Army, and Rosecrans, Pope, Sikes, Doubleday, Stone and Reynolds, of the Federal Army. He found fame in the war with Mexico and was one of the six officers twice brevetted for meritorious service upon the field of battle and was awarded by his native State a sword of honor for his valor. He was in command of the North Carolina camp of instruction, and when it appeared that a battle was imminent, he was allowed to form the First North Carolina Volunteer Regiment. With ten thousand men to select from, he chose a regiment whose *personnel* has not been surpassed in military history. The officers of the various companies were men of prominence in the State and the rank and file were men of character, worth and social position—leaders in their respective communities.

Many of the men of this regiment afterwards became well known in the annals of war as leaders of divisions, brigades and regiments in the Confederate Army. Among the men of this regiment who became distinguished may be mentioned Major-General R. F. Hoke, probably the most distinguished Southern soldier now living; Brigadier-Generals J. H. Lane and W. G. Lewis, who won fame at the cannon's mouth. Of its members who afterwards commanded regiments I might mention Colonels F. M. Parker, C. C. Lee, C. M. Avery, W. J. Hoke, J. K. Marshall, W. A. Owens, J. C. S. McDowell, Hector McKeithan, W. M. Hardy, R. L. Coleman, John H. Anderson, J. L. Bridgers, Francis W. Bird, Joseph H. Saunders, Joseph B. Starr, Charles W. Broadfoot, and others. Of the members of this regiment one hundred and twenty-three attained the rank of captain and above. This regiment,

being six months volunteers, was soon disbanded, and furnished officers to many other regiments.

At Bethel, the First North Carolina Volunteers, with four companies of the Richmond Howitzers, four hundred strong, under the command of Major George W. Randolph, afterwards Confederate Secretary of War, met, repulsed and defeated five thousand Federal troops under General Benjamin F. Butler. After their brave leader, Major Theodore Winthrop, was killed, the Federal troops threw away their accoutrements and fled, and so precipitate was their departure that their dead were thrown out of their wagons in their flight. In command at this battle was your gallant Colonel McGruder. During the battle a battery becoming disabled was abandoned and the troops supporting it were withdrawn by his order. This position was occupied by Colonel Townsend with his regiment, but was recaptured in a brilliant charge by Captain John L. Bridgers, Company A, Edgecombe Guards. Colonel Hill suggested to Captain Bridgers to burn a house in his front which was being used as a shelter by the enemy's sharpshooters. Volunteers were called for to burn it. Corporal George Williams and privates Henry L. Wyatt, Thomas Fallon, John H. Thorpe, R. H. Bradley and R. H. Ricks responded. They at once leaped the works and rushed towards the house. A volley was fired by the enemy and Wyatt fell. A small clot of blood on his forehead marked the fatal wound. Thus was slain our brave boy soldier—a martyr in a holy cause—a victim in an unrighteous war against our liberties —a glorious and heroic death. He sleeps the last long sleep in your peaceful city of the dead, Hollywood, on the James, and we place in your care this tablet which a grateful State erects to his memory.

Before me I see the kindly eyes and snowy heads of three of those hero volunteers, my old friends Captains Thorpe, Bradley and Ricks. May God spare them to us many years yet before they are called to "cross over the river and rest

under the shade of the trees" with their gallant comrades who have gone before.

The commander of the Bethel Regiment, Colonel D. H. Hill, in my judgment, was the greatest soldier furnished to the Confederacy by the Old North State. As a fighter he never had a superior. In the first year of the war when Lee commanded the grandest army that ever trod a hemisphere, with Jackson as his right-hand and Hill as his left, he knew no disaster. He was invincible. Jackson was the genius of war and Hill a man upon whom the God of battles smiled. Jackson, the "Stonewall" and the daring leader of an ever victorious army; Hill, the lion-hearted and iron-handed hero whose blood-stained legions formed the Ironsides of that immortal band, the Army of Northern Virginia!

I think it can be said that Hill's Division of the Army of Northern Virginia was never defeated. At South Mountain the whole world wondered when Hill with four thousand men held back for a whole day thirty thousand of McClellan's magnificent troops.

He was transferred to the Army of the West and largely contributed to the victory at Chickamauga. Had he been in command there the Union army would have been destroyed. Had he commanded the Army of the Tennessee there would have been no Sherman's march to the sea.

Virginians and North Carolinians, this is a hallowed scene —the two great sisters with entwined arms paying tribute to their dead, mingling their tears at a joint shrine.

You are the same people, brothers and sisters of a common ancestry. In 1860 the people of Virginia and North Carolina were almost entirely agricultural. The history of the world teaches us that an agricultural people are the most patriotic. They live close to nature and gather strength and inspiration by contact with mother earth. The soil is sacred to them, for hard by each home, be it ever so humble, is a quiet little spot that holds all that is mortal of their lost ones—the ashes of those whom they loved best. They love

their country, their native land, the home that shelters their own, and they are ever ready to bare their breasts to defend it. When the foot of the invader touched that soil they sprang to arms to defend their homes. Their mother States were calling, and they answered "Here!" Love and duty bade them go. How well they met the call let the records show. The unknown graves all over Virginia, yea, the little grass-grown mounds from the Potomac to the Rio Grande, could they speak, would say, Go tell it in the Southland—go tell our mother State that we lie here in obedience to her orders; we did our duty and died for her and found it sweet thus to die.

North Carolinians loved the Union and were loth to leave it, but when the red hand of war seized our sisters' throats we hesitated no longer. We pledged our troth to the bride Confederacy and left the Union without a dissenting vote in our convention. With one hundred and fifteen thousand three hundred and sixty-nine military population we furnished one hundred and twenty-seven thousand soldiers; more than twice our proportionate share, which, according to our population, was sixty thousand. We furnished one-fifth of the troops of the Southern Confederacy, and one-half of the men who guarded your capital were from the Old North State.

From Bethel to Appomattox we wrote with blazing guns the brightest page in America's history, giving in death forty thousand two hundred and seventy-five souls, which was thirty-five per cent. of our military population.

We joined hands with you here in 1861, and when the crimson tide of war rolled highest we were with you on the crest of the wave; when the lurid hell of death and defeat glared upon you we were there. We charged with you at Seven Pines and Chancellorsville, Spottsylvania and Gettysburg, and at Appomattox our guns ceased only after our great chieftain had surrendered us!

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In the Spanish-American War it seemed again to be the fortune of these two States, Virginia and Carolina, to fight side by side; this time under the flag of a reunited country. Under the command of your peerless leader, the gallant Fitzhugh Lee, the *beau ideal* of the American soldier, our boys went forth to war—and the First Regiment North Carolina Volunteers, carrying the Stars and Stripes, had the glory to be the first American troops to move through the streets of Havana.

Virginia, you are the mother of States and Presidents—you are rich in history—richer in heroes, but richest in the love of your sister States. When you have suffered they have bled. Your bosom is sacred to the South—there rest her most gallant dead; doubly sacred to North Carolina, because for every grave made for the son of any other State, two graves were here made for the sons of North Carolina!

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